



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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EARLY MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING SEASON PROPOSALS CALL FOR CLOSURE OF SPECIAL TEAL SEASONS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed regulatory frameworks for this fall's early migratory bird hunting seasons include several significant changes in response to low waterfowl populations and drought throughout U.S. and Canadian prairie nesting areas.

The Service proposes suspension of special September teal seasons this fall due to extremely low blue-winged teal populations, extremely poor habitat conditions, and the likelihood of very poor production this year. Previously, 13 states (Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Texas) had an early 9-day teal season.

Also, the Service proposes to eliminate a special September duck season in Iowa and make adjustments in the bag limits of special seasons to be held in Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee to reduce the take of teal.

The early season frameworks cover seasons opening prior to October 1 and relate to mourning, white-winged, and white-tipped doves; band-tailed pigeons; woodcock; common snipe; rails; common moorhens and purple gallinules; teal; sandhill cranes; sea ducks; and special falconry regulations.

The proposed frameworks, published in the July 11 Federal Register would also reduce the bag limit for pintails and close the canvasback season in Alaska.

Frank Dunkle, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, cautioned that the proposed frameworks may be further restricted if warranted by additional information that is becoming available on duck production and the overall impact of the drought.

States will select actual hunting dates and regulations from the final set of frameworks. Comments on the proposed frameworks are invited and should be sent to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Bird Management Office, Main Interior Bldg., Washington, DC. The comment period will close July 20.